

Human Services Advisory Council
Notes from March 30, 2006

Present: Leslie Gordon, David Rogers
Staff: Pam Doran
Guests: Debbie Taylor, Renee Andrews, Ann Murty

Because a quorum was not present, official minutes were not taken. The following is a brief summary of the discussion that took place.

1. Discussion of the new voting machines

City Registrar Debbie Taylor and two members of the Electoral Board, Renee Andrews and Ann Murty, came to HSAC at the request of Chair David Rogers to explain the voting process in Falls Church and the decision to go to a paperless voting system. Debbie first explained the make-up of the Electoral Board. In order to maintain impartiality, the Board is appointed by the Arlington County Court and has three members on staggered terms. Two of the three members are chosen by the same political party as the current Governor of Virginia; the third is chosen by the other political party. The decision to use the current voting machines, the Hart E-Slate, is based on recently passed legislation in Virginia. This legislation requires, among other things, that the local jurisdictions use one of several approved machines, all of which are paper-less systems. Another component of this law ensures that the voting machines are accessible to all voters regardless of any disability they might have. The Electoral Board and a sampling of voters tested several machines and chose the E-Slate.

One concern that has been expressed in general is that these electronic voting machines do not produce a verifiable, auditable (paper) trail. The members of the Electoral Board assured HSAC that there are 5 ways to audit the E-Slates to verify election results. Votes are recorded in the E-Slate, on a memory card in the E-Slate, and to a “controller” machine at the polls; a random-ordered paper printout of all ballots cast can also be generated if necessary, as well. The Electoral Board also noted that state law specifically disallows paper trails. The City contracted with Hart to create the ballot for the machines based on state requirements. The members of the Electoral Board are very confident in the security and dependability of these machines. They also conducted several demonstrations throughout the community prior to the November election to prepare voters to use the new machines.

2. Boards and Commissions Fair

Leslie Gordon attended the Boards and Commissions Fair as the representative for HSAC. Two individuals spoke with her about joining, but neither has applied. There are two vacancies currently.

3. Staff Report

Pam Doran reported that the Housing Commission does not support a consolidated funding process. They feel that their focus should be only housing, the Community Service Fund has a

broader scope. As a result of these discussions, though, the Housing Commission does intend to tighten their funding criteria to focus more directly on Falls Church City.

HHS is beginning to receive results of the demographic survey. Approximately 25% of City households participated, and the two most common reasons individuals gave for moving to Falls Church were convenience and location (the third reason was schools). The final report should be finished in June; HSAC would like to invite the consultant to present the results at the June meeting.

The next HSAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 20th; currently there are no items for the agenda.